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winter
2024

UTMSU ANNUAL REPORT



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO MISSISSAUGA STUDENTS' UNION
LOCAL 109 OF THE CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

ANNUAL REPORT

winter
2024



University of Toronto Mississauga
Students' Union

LOCAL 109 OF THE CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

    @MYUTMSU

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LETTER TO MEMBERS

Dear Members,

Welcome to the 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the University of Toronto Mississauga Students' Union (UTMSU). Over the course of the past year, your UTMSU has been hard at work to meet and support students' demands in various ways, whether that be providing cost-saving services, organizing collective power to advocate for students' rights, or building our community through events and initiatives. We are excited to meet again for this AGM to reflect on and share some of the work we've done together, and to collectively consider the direction of our union moving forward.

Since our last AGM, the UTMSU has continued to work on the campaigns that matter most to students: Education for All, Students Against War, Divest Now, Transit Advocacy, Fairness for International Students, My Mental Health Matters, Academic Advocacy, Food Security, and Access to Student Housing. We believe that education is a fundamental right, and should be made free and accessible for all. But that is not the be all and end all of our work. We also need to ensure that our post-secondary institutions are inclusive, that we create safer spaces for all students, and that we build and maintain a quality learning environment.

Additionally, the UTMSU has expanded on the services that help save students' money. These include the rebranding and expansion of the Peer Support Program Center to become the Here to Help Program, the new Academic Mentorship Program in collaboration with societies, scaling up our bursary program, adding more coverage as part of the Health & Dental plan, renegotiating the UPass program, and more. The UTMSU also continues to run the tax clinic, the graduation photography sessions, the textbook exchange program, the laptop rental program, and the gym equipment rental program.

Finally, we've aimed to build community and create strong ties between students. A lot of that work was done and will be done through events such as Orientation, Hallo-Week, Academic Advocacy Week, Free Breakfast Wednesdays, Frost Week, Multicultural Week, Pride Month programming, Black History Month programming, numerous summer events, and more!

Over the semester, together with students, we have made a significant and positive impact on the UTM community, but the work doesn't end there. There is still so much to achieve, from advocating for free and accessible education for all to creating safer spaces on campus that are reflective of our diverse identities. As we've seen over the term, we hold so much power when we are united, when we organise, and when we come together and strive for a common goal.

Always remember, the students united will never be defeated.

*On behalf of the **UTMSU**,*

Joelle Salsa, President

Philip Anyang, VP Equity

Sidra Ahsan, VP University Affairs

Daniel Ripoll, VP External

Ronny Chen, VP Internal

Joy Pius, VP Campus Life



MEET THE EXECS

From left to right, top to bottom: **Daniel Ripoll** (VP External), **Joy Pius** (VP Campus Life), **Philip Anyang** (VP Equity), **Ronny Chen** (VP Internal), **Sidra Ahsan** (VP University Affairs), **Joelle Salsa** (President)

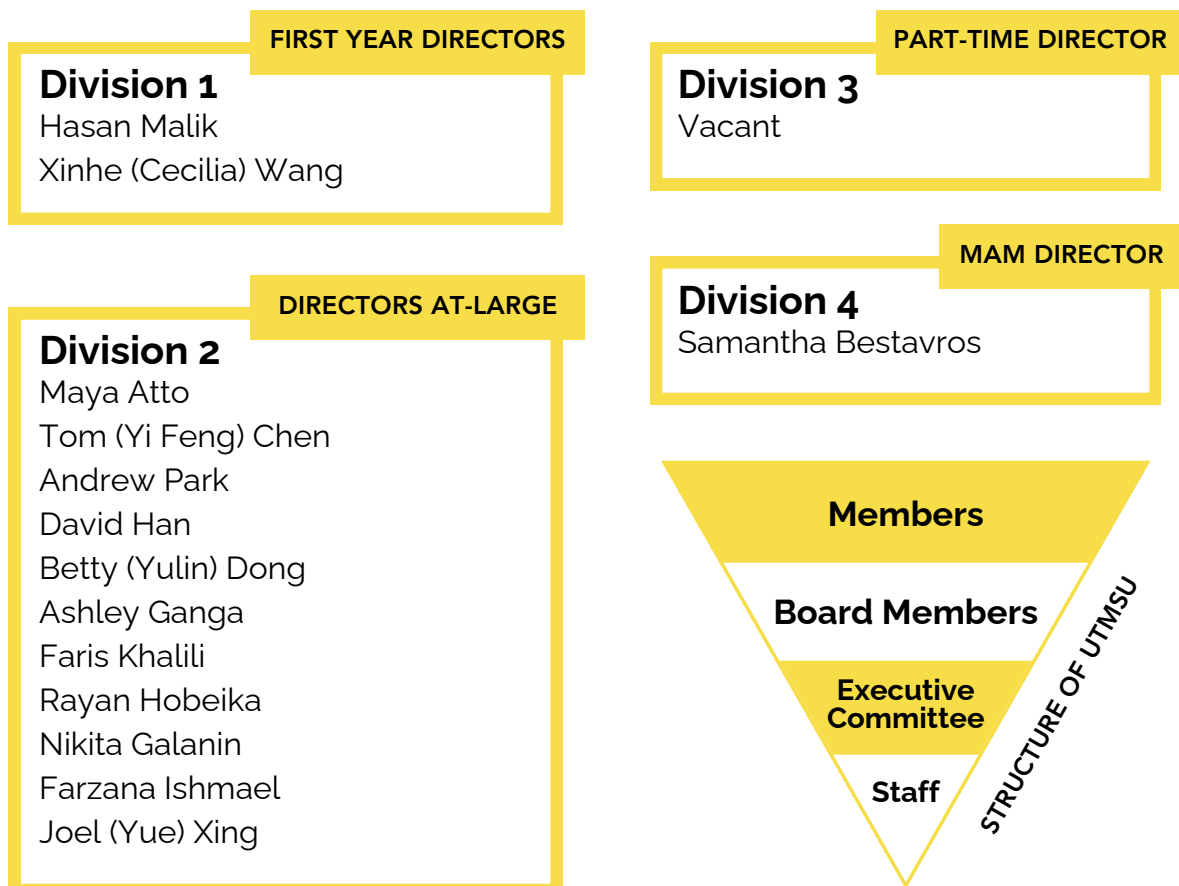
ABOUT THE UTMSU

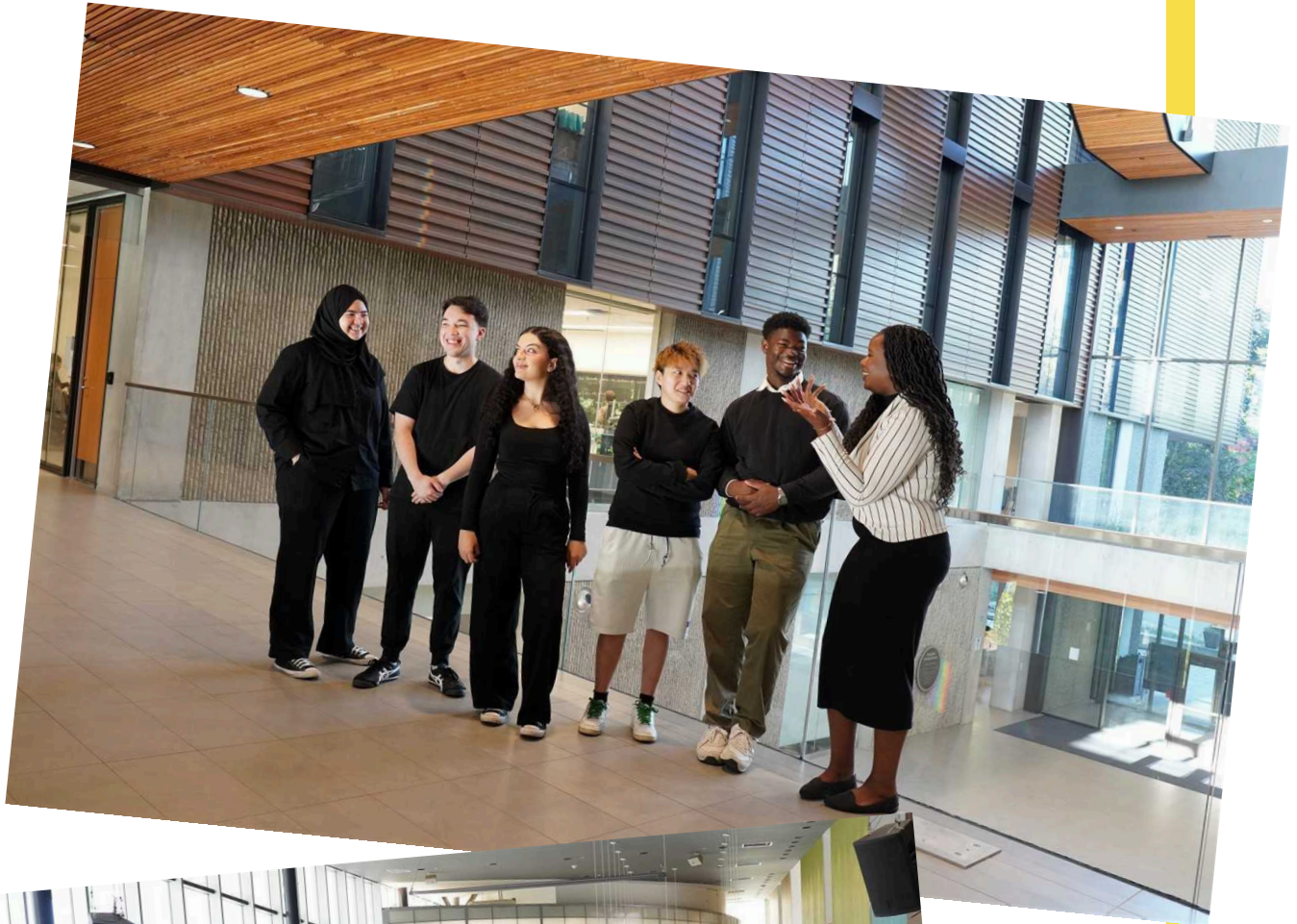
The **University of Toronto Mississauga Students' Union** (UTMSU), formerly known as the Erindale College Students' Union, is your local students' union which represents over 16,000 full-time and part-time undergraduate students at the University of Toronto Mississauga.

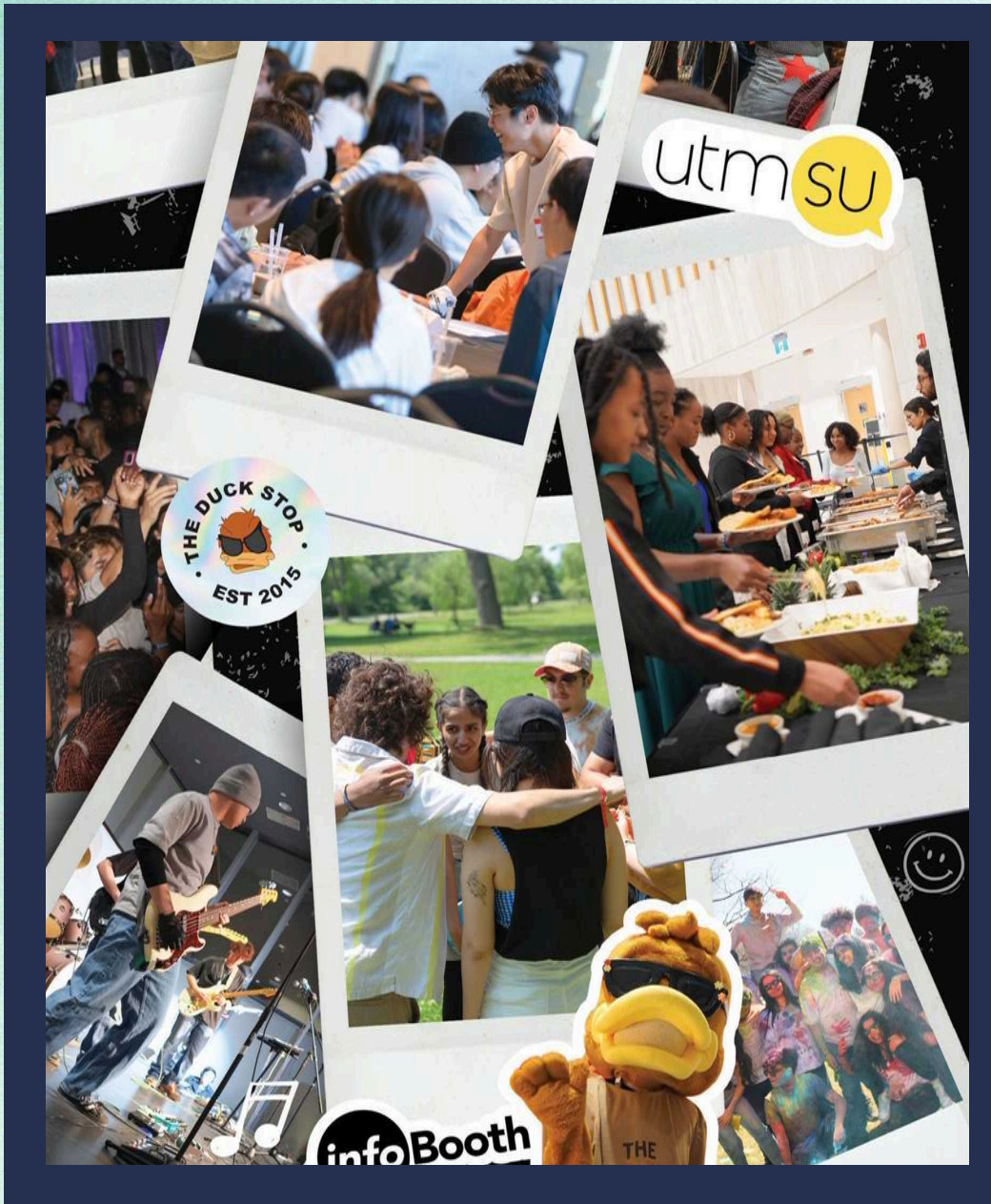
The UTMSU is a **non-profit organization** that abides by the Ontario Not-For-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA) and the UTMSU's Constitution and Bylaws, which is set by and for members. The day-to-day operations of the organization are managed by the Executive Committee, Full-Time and Part-Time Staff, and a Board of Directors.

The UTMSU board of directors is comprised of the Executive Committee, two (2) First-Year directors, eleven (11) Directors At-Large, two (2) Part-Time directors, and one (1) Professional Faculties director for the Medical Academy of Mississauga (MAM).

BOARD MEMBERS







STRATEGIC VISION

The UTMSU plays a key role on campus by supporting members and advocating for their rights.

The UTMSU believes in a free, accessible, and high-quality post-secondary education system for all. To accomplish this goal, the UTMSU provides cost-saving services, implements campaigns and mobilizes members, provides alternative policies and proposals, and influences key decision-makers to improve student life. The UTMSU also hosts events throughout the year to promote healthy living, community, and engagement amongst members.

CAMPAIGNS & ADVOCACY

EDUCATION FOR ALL

The Education for All (Ed4All) campaign was launched to pressure the University of Toronto and the Provincial and Federal Governments to make post-secondary education high-quality, accessible, and free for all students. The demands are as follows:

1. Immediate reduction and gradual elimination of tuition fees for all students
2. Conversion of student loans into student grants
3. Creation of alternatives to mainstream education
4. Increase non-academic scholarships for students
5. Eliminate Out-Of-Province tuition hikes

This year, we are focused on ensuring that UTM stakeholders are aware of and committed to making education more accessible and affordable. While advocating for the long-term goal of free, accessible education, we recognize the immediate financial hardships students face. To address this, we are implementing interim "bandaid solutions," such as increasing paid experiential learning opportunities, scholarships, and bursaries, to help alleviate the burden of post-secondary costs.

As such, this year the UTMSU has been working with the Experiential Education Unit to bring even more paid Co-op internship programs to UTM. This means that students will have meaningful paid job opportunities that not only help fund living expenses, but also provide valuable work experience in their relevant studies. To ensure the Co-op internship programs are representative of what students want, we created a survey to accurately understand students demands and expectations for this new experiential opportunity.

Moreover, we've been advocating for more scholarships, including scholarships for international students, to diversify the opportunities available to our student body. Our aim is not only to increase the number of scholarships but also to create a more accessible scholarship application portal. To that end, we worked with the Registrar's office to enhance the scholarship portal, making it more user-friendly and enabling students to apply for as many relevant scholarships as possible. We believe that these efforts will help us bring more scholarships and bursaries to students who excel academically and are actively engaged in giving back to their community.



Last but not least, we brought the Education For All campaign to Lobby Week! Lobby Week took place in the Winter semester, as well as early November 2024. Throughout Lobby Week, we advocated for the Education For All demands, urging both the University and government officials, including City Councillors. Given that SMA3 will conclude in March 2025, we discussed our recommendations for SMA4, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing accessibility and financial support for students in the new mandate.

Our strength lies in our personal stories and our numbers. By sharing the diverse perspectives of students who are experiencing and have experienced hardships due to the financial hardships that come with post-secondary education, we will create a strong, unified voice that cannot be ignored.

For questions related to the Education For All campaign or to get involved in this campaign please contact our President, Joelle Salsa, at president@utmsu.ca

ACCESSIBILITY CAMPAIGN

Note-takers play a vital role in ensuring students with accessibility accommodations have equal access to information and resources. However, despite the importance of their contributions, note-takers registered with Accessibility Services are not compensated for the significant time and effort they invest in completing and editing notes. For students juggling academic, work, and personal responsibilities, prioritizing this entirely voluntary commitment can be challenging. Additionally, While feedback on the note-taking program is generally positive, issues such as missing or poorly done notes persist. To address these concerns and ensure support for both students with accessibility needs and note-takers, the UTMSU is advocating for paid note-taker positions.

By compensating note-takers, UTM can ensure a higher level of accountability, while also guaranteeing that the notes provided are not only reliable, but also of a higher quality and efficiency. As part of this initiative, the UTMSU has reached out to a number of prominent universities across North America and Europe, including Cambridge University, Boston University, Stanford University, and Dalhousie University, to explore best practices and learn from their experiences in implementing similar systems

In addition to advocating for paid note takers, the UTMSU plans on lobbying the university to provide accessible lecture recordings or lecture notes for students who are unable to attend class due to unforeseen circumstances like mental health crises, family emergencies, and other events out of the students' control. This would ensure that all students, regardless of the challenges that they face, have equal access to the academic content they need to succeed.

TRANSIT ADVOCATING PARTY (TAP)

After consistent meetings with MiWay representatives and consultations with Mississauga city councillors, the Transit Advocating Party was the next step of the Better Transit campaign. The Transit Advocating Party (TAP), was launched in response to student concerns with the current state of MiWay, and to provide students with the opportunity to organize with the aim of improving transit to make it more efficient and student-friendly.

In collaboration with 3 campus groups TAP was designed as a unique and low-commitment opportunity that is also CCR-accredited. It's designated exclusively for UTM students who are interested in stepping into the advocacy space and aims to actively work towards enhancing our transit services. TAP is actively searching for more collaborators on campus to increase its membership and gain more perspectives. Whether you're comfortable with public speaking or have an interest in organizing peaceful protests, TAP is the platform used to facilitate change.

TAP is responsible for some of the UTMSU's biggest victories with regard to transit. For example, the introduction of the 126 bus line and the moving of the U-pass from QR codes to the Presto e-voucher program (your Presto cards). TAP continues to fight for more initiatives throughout the year. Currently we have a survey circulating to collect data to use for our meetings with City Councillors to make service change recommendations. We are also currently studying the viability of a two-way service go or MiWay bus from Milton to UTM.

For any questions related to the Transit Advocating Party please contact our Vice President External, Daniel Ripoll, vpexternal@utmsu.ca.



WUSC

The World University Service of Canada (WUSC) is a Canadian non-profit focused on building a more equitable and sustainable world. UTM students contribute \$2.20 per semester to the WUSC levy, supporting the Student Refugee Program (SRP) at UTM, which resettles one student annually since 2008 through a partnership between WUSC and the UTMSU. The UTMSU's WUSC committee, with support from volunteers, organizes events, raises awareness on refugee issues, and promotes the SRP. The International Education Centre also provides additional support to aid the student's transition.

This year, WUSC events included de-stressor socials in collaboration with Here2Help, formerly UTMSU Peer Support, featuring music and game nights, tote bag painting, and DIY slime-making. Other events included a holiday dinner, a Valentine's Day chocolate fundraiser with Peace by Chocolate, a refugee-founded brand from Syria, and a pumpkin carving event. The WUSC team has plans for more initiatives in the coming months so please stay tuned via the @wuscutm instagram!

For questions related to the WUSC Program or Committee please contact the WUSC Coordinator, Jada Best, at wusc@utmsu.ca, or the VP University Affairs, Sidra Ahsan at vpua@utmsu.ca

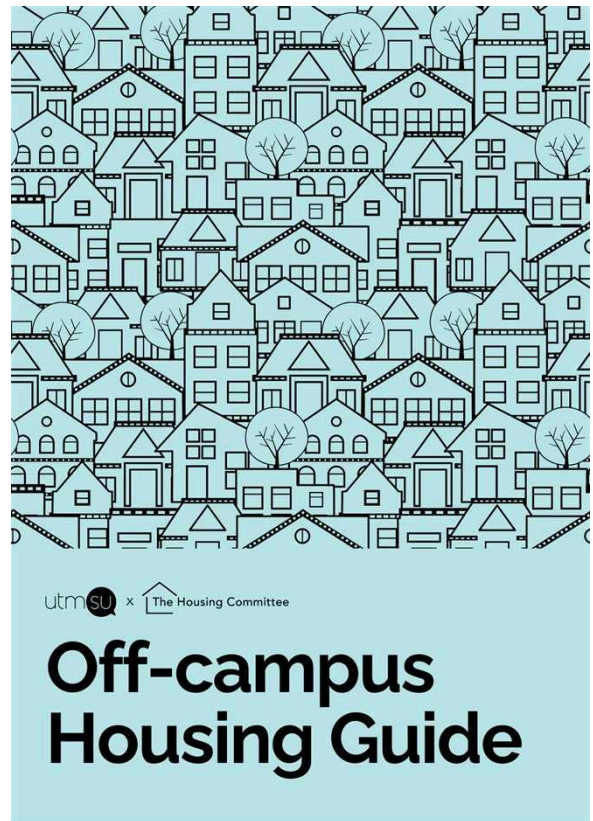


ACCESS TO STUDENT HOUSING

Students deserve access to housing! The UTMSU created a Housing Committee to expand the Access to Housing Campaign and address student concerns regarding access to safe and low-cost housing. Members of the housing committee have been given the mandate to increase on-campus and off-campus housing, educate students on tenant rights, lobby for affordable housing in the Peel Region, and to conduct UTM specific housing research.

The UTMSU Housing committee has undertaken three key initiatives: The push for a housing grant, the creation of a student district, and keeping the students aware and informed about their rights as tenants.

Students often grapple with various challenges related to housing, including the uncertainty of locating suitable off-campus housing for the school year, navigating



potential rental scams, understanding their rights as tenants, and accessing financial aid for housing, among other concerns.

To address these issues, a comprehensive housing guide was created. This guide aims to consolidate the abundance of housing information available to students, providing them with a valuable resource for making informed decisions about their accommodation and also providing financial assistance. To further ensure students are not being taken advantage of, the Housing Committee is working on launching an educational campaign in collaboration with the University Administration, the City of Mississauga, and other non-profit partners meant to educate students on their tenant rights and give them an avenue to ask questions they might not otherwise be able to find the answers to.



HOUSING INSECURITY CAN BE SOLVED TOGETHER.

Sign up to become a Volunteer for the Housing Committee and be a part of the change.

Link in bio



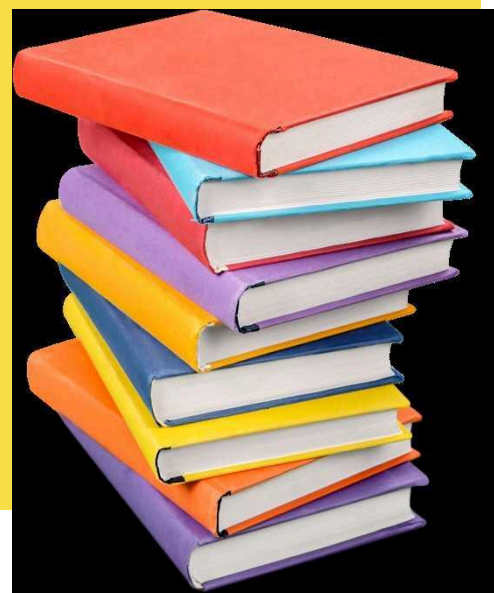
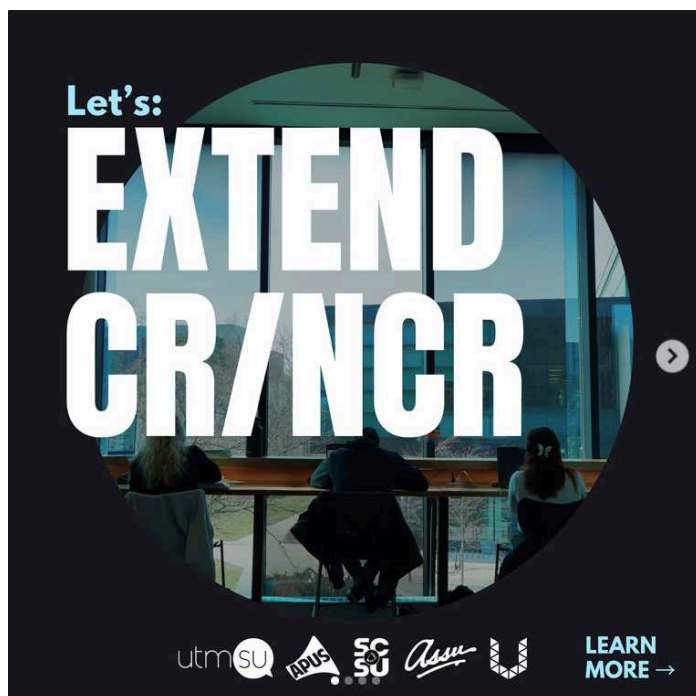
The Housing Committee

In the midst of the persistent housing crisis, students are encountering formidable challenges in securing accommodation. Recent studies by Zumper Inc. and Statistics Canada reveal that the average cost of a studio apartment in Mississauga reached \$1,899 in November 2023. In response to this pressing issue, the housing committee is collaborating with HOUSE Canada to explore the potential establishment of a cooperative residence either on or near the campus. The committee is also currently meeting with members of the City Council, provincial members of parliament, and members of the University administration to work on solutions to the housing crisis. An idea we have been bringing up in our recent meetings is rooming regulation reform, which would essentially allow for houses to be partitioned into multiple rooms for more capacity so long as the house is modified according to the City's safety regulations.

Moreover, the UTMSU has been in regular meetings with external housing organizations such as UTILE (a housing organization in Quebec that has successfully lobbied for a student run cooperative residence), Justice for Peel Coalition, the Right to Housing Coalition led by Canadian Centre for Housing Rights (CCHR), ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) and ACTO (Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario)

Finally, UTMSU has been conducting UTM-specific housing research to understand the unique challenges faced by our students. In the past year, we shared a survey organized by UTILE and another created by the housing committee, designed to produce housing data that will help the UTMSU make well-informed decisions.

For questions related to Accessible Housing please contact our Vice President External, Daniel Ripoll, vpexternal@utmsu.ca.



ACADEMIC ADVOCACY

Academic Advocacy aims to ensure that all students have proper accommodations when they need it. The UTMSU has continued to lobby UTM administration to extend the credit/non-credit (CR/NCR) deadline to the day when students receive their final grades. Extending the deadline will allow students to make an informed decision when deciding to CR/NCR a course.

Over the summer, we collaborated with the University of Toronto Students' Union (UTSU), Scarborough Campus Student Union (SCSU), Association of Part-time Undergraduate Students at UofT (APUS), and Arts and Science Students' Union (ASSU) on a UTOR ID-protected survey to gather data on U of T students' experiences with the CR/NCR policy. This joint survey, launched on August 7, 2024, also includes an optional petition, both of which will be presented to university administration. Collecting this data over time is vital, as it can drive significant academic policy amendments.

Preliminary findings were presented during a lobby Week meeting on November 5th, 2024 and efforts are underway to organise a joint meeting where all union leaders can be present to discuss the survey's findings in depth. The collected data is currently being analysed to prepare a thorough report, which all unions will present to the administration as a unified front.

For questions related to Academic Advocacy please contact our Vice President University Affairs, Sidra Ahsan, vpua@utrmsu.ca.

EVENTS



ART/IC WEEK

Art/ic Week was a vibrant celebration of creativity and community at UTM, featuring a diverse array of events that engaged participants of all students. The week kicked off with the Kite Painting event, in collaboration with the GSA, which honored the cultural festival of Uttarayan and invited attendees to express their artistic flair on colorful kites. Following this, students enjoyed "Shiver and Paint," a cozy opportunity to create winter-themed artworks alongside Studio X and DVSSS. Film enthusiasts gathered for the Frosted Film Night hosted by the Film Club, showcasing seasonal favourites.

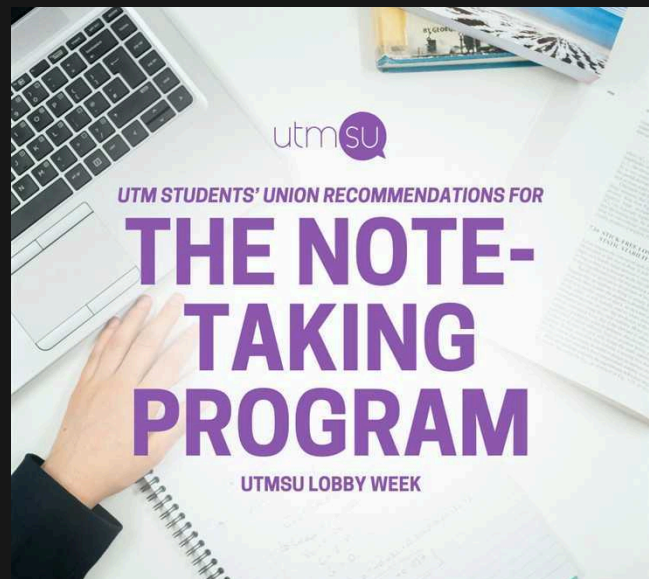
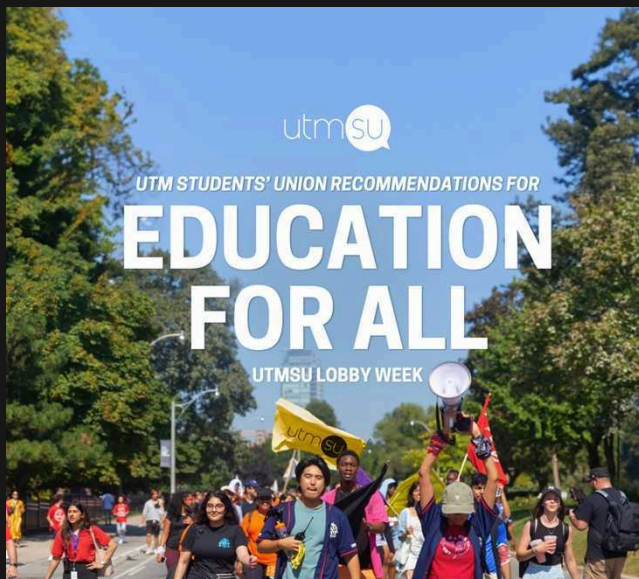
The Crochet Club's "Stitch-a-Snowflake" event allowed participants to craft their own unique snowflake decorations, fostering a sense of hands-on creativity. The Feed the Soul Art Exhibition, organized by Studio X, showcased the talents of local artists, while the Art/ic Week Contest encouraged friendly competition and creativity among students. Together, these events created a festive atmosphere that highlighted the intersection of art and community spirit at UTM.

LOBBY WEEK

Lobby Week is a time when the UTMSU meets with the university administration to address and advocate for student concerns. In Lobby Week 2023, held on March 27, 2024, the discussion focused on improving accessibility for students through proposals for paid note-taking services and more asynchronous and recorded lecture options.

There also was a proposal to implement more safe and inclusive academic spaces. While the administration was present to hear these ideas, they did not make any firm commitments at that time.

The discussions continued on November 5, 2024, with UTMSU presenting additional research and insights, gathered through consultations with other universities. This meeting covered previous accessibility topics, along with new proposals on Education for All, the Credit/No Credit (CR/NCR) campaign, Paid-note taking and asynchronous lectures, and issues related to housing and transit.





BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Last year's Black History Month was a success with the help of volunteers and clubs such as Caribbean Connections, Black Literature and Arts Club, Black Students' Association, and African Students' Association. UTMSU hosted a month-long series of events, all of which covered pressing issues that Black students and the Black community deal with on a daily basis.

Black History month kicked off with a "Welcome Ceremony" Gala in the Kaneff Round table and included collaboration with various Black Campus Groups, as well as departments such as Black@UTM). Following the "Welcoming Ceremony," students were able to attend other events such as "Buy Black"--- a market for Black owned businesses (including those owned by

UTM students) in the (including those owned by UTM students) in the Student Centres. "Open Mic Night" was the next event, where students could enjoy Black performers. For Valentine's Day, the BHM Committee held "Love, Sex, and Relationships," in which students had conversations surrounding sex, relationships, love, and consent in the Black community.

The month was wrapped up with "Black Careers in Law," an event that brings Black identifying students together to discuss ideas regarding attending Law school and what it means to be Black in those professions. As of now the Black History Committee has re-convened for the planning and development of the next BHM events happening in February 2025.





SUSTAINABILITY WEEK

Sustainability week was held as a collaboration between the UTMSU, Sustainability Office, and the Masters of Sustainability Management Program. During this week, the UTMSU organized a wide variety of events ranging from a Love + Sustainability panel, a Trashion show, writing workshops, a Food Security panel, and much more!

This summer, the UTMSU also received a sustainability grant from a non-for profit organisation called Lift360 to aid in the various sustainable goals of the union.

BLOCK PARTY

The Block Party at UTM was an exciting celebration that brought students together for a series of vibrant events throughout March. The festivities began with Nowruz Egg Painting, where participants embraced the traditions of the Persian New Year by decorating eggs with intricate designs. The Taste of South Asia event, organized by the Erindale Punjabi Association (EPA), offered students a delicious culinary journey through various South Asian cuisines. Holi: Rang Barse, hosted by the Indian Students Association (ISA) and Hindu Student Council (HSC), filled the campus with colour and joy as students celebrated the festival of colours.

The Spring Market featured local vendors and crafts, allowing students to shop for unique items while supporting the community. A Block Party Brunch provided a delightful social setting for students to enjoy good food and conversation. Additionally, Spring-Fest, organized by Harmonix, showcased musical talent and entertainment, adding to the festive atmosphere.

Every Friday of March, the Board Game Lounge with Erindale Gaming Organization (EGO) created a relaxed space for students to unwind and engage in friendly competition. Overall, the Block Party fostered a sense of belonging and celebration among UTM students.

FALL, WINTER, AND SUMMER EXAM DE-STRESSORS

The UTMSU organized exam de-stressor events during the Fall, Winter, and Summer exam periods to help students unwind and manage stress.

In Fall 2023, de-stressor activities were part of Winter Fest, which ran from December 4 to December 12. Events included ceramic painting, puppy yoga, gingerbread house making, and a holiday dinner.

For Winter 2024, de-stressor events featured a decompression space, a DIY slime-making workshop, a zen painting workshop, and a board game lounge. Finally, Summer 2024's de-stressor event was "Summer and Paint," a tote bag painting session where students were provided with the necessary supplies to paint their tote bags.

QUEST 24 ORIENTATION WEEK

UTMSU Orientation this year focused on helping incoming students find a healthy balance in their lives, addressing the overwhelming feelings that can accompany the start of university. The festivities included a lively paint and foam party, creating a fun atmosphere for students to unwind and connect. Participants later enjoyed a scenic boat cruise and a trip to Medieval Times, where they were immersed in an exciting evening of knights and entertainment. Central to the orientation was the Quest, which engaged first-years in a spirited cheer-off, fostering camaraderie during group time with leaders, and concluded with an indoor version of capture the flag that encouraged teamwork and friendly competition.

Additionally, the two-day Student Centre Takeover transformed the space into a vibrant hub with various stations, allowing students to drop by and paint, play video games or board games, participate in karaoke, and enjoy dance performances from campus clubs.

This multifaceted orientation experience highlighted the importance of balancing academic responsibilities with social engagement, reinforcing that university life is not just about grades but also about making lasting memories and connections.





WECHAT STUDENT ORIENTATION

The UTMSU WeChat Orientation is a traditional event organised by the UTMSU WeChat team, which has been held for nearly eight years. The WeChat team's orientation aims to help new mandarin-speaking students better understand the UTM campus and the UTMSU. In September, the WeChat team hosted the 2024 WeChat Orientation, which was attended by nearly two hundred new students.

During the event, we introduced various campus and UTMSU services. The event took place at Blind Duck Pub, and in addition to introducing the campus, we incorporated many fun activities, such as dance performances, a raffle, and icebreaker games.

WELCOME BACK WEEK

Welcome Back Week was an exhilarating four-day event that provided students with a fantastic opportunity to reconnect with their campus community and discover new resources. Throughout the week, various sponsors set up tables alongside campus groups, clubs, and societies, creating a lively atmosphere filled with information and excitement.

Students had the chance to explore a wide array of organizations, from academic clubs to cultural societies, allowing them to find their niche and make meaningful connections.

This event not only showcased the diverse opportunities available on campus but also highlighted essential resources for student support, wellness, and extracurricular activities.

The success of Welcome Back Week was evident as students eagerly engaged with representatives, participated in interactive activities, and learned about events and programs that would enrich their university experience. It served as a wonderful kick-off to the academic year, fostering a sense of belonging and encouraging students to take full advantage of both on-campus and off-campus resources as they embarked on their educational journey.





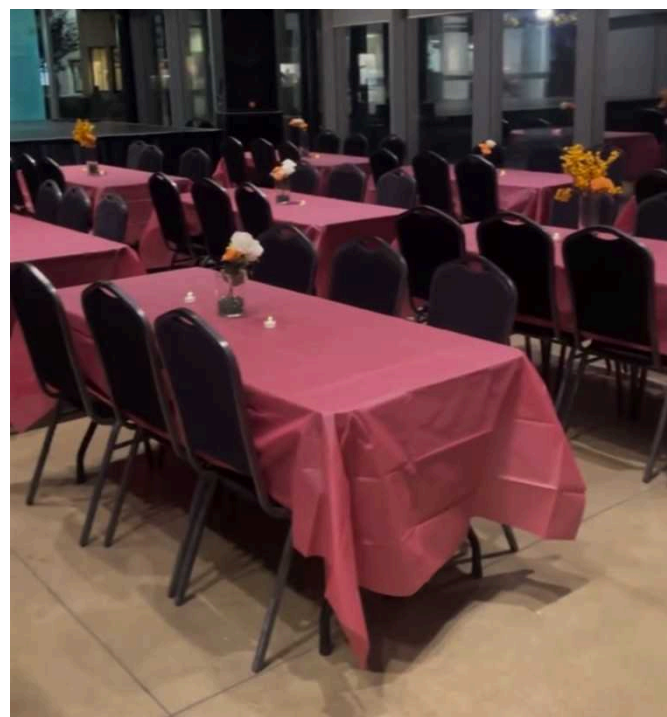
ALL YOU CAN EAT
ALL YOU CAN EAT
ALL YOU CAN EAT
ALL YOU CAN EAT
ALL YOU CAN EAT



buffet
(DESI EDITION)
TICKETS
-\$10-

NOV 13 STARTING 6 PM
STUDENT CENTRE

BUY YOUR BUFFET TICKETS AT THE LINK IN BIO
*In buffet style, no takeout is available



QUIET PARADE

This year, the UTMSU partnered with the Blackwood Gallery to host the first Quiet Parade, an event raising awareness about accessibility challenges on campus. A key focus was addressing the misconception of the "five-minute" walk, emphasizing that this timeframe often excludes individuals with accessibility needs. Designed as a low-stimulus event, the parade was silent and showcased art and emotional expression.

The event featured a live runway performance by staff and volunteers, highlighting accessibility awareness through expressive art. Along the route, tables allowed attendees to engage with the event's themes and ask questions. After the parade, participants could choose between a loud zone in the CCIT courtyard for interactive activities and socializing or a quiet decompression space in the CCT atrium for a low-stimulus environment. The event aimed to promote inclusivity and draw attention to the unique needs of students with accessibility requirements.

ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT BUFFETS

The all-you-can-eat buffet is a great deal at just \$10-\$15 per person. Every month, we roll out a fresh spread featuring a unique selection of dishes that align with the season or special holiday themes. For example, we had a Thanksgiving themed buffet in October. The buffet is one way that the UTMSU aims to tackle food insecurity by providing students with as much food as they are able to eat within an hour for an affordable and below market rate.

CHILLS & THRILLS WEEK

Halloweek, affectionately dubbed "Chills and Thrills Week," was packed with an exciting lineup of events designed to bring everyone together in the spirit of Halloween. The festivities kicked off with a thrilling movie night, aptly named "Scream Fest," in collaboration with the Film Club, where classic horror films had everyone on the edge of their seats.

Next up was the much-anticipated haunted house, cleverly titled "Escape from Erindale," created in partnership with the Arts Club and English and Drama Student Society (EDSS), immersing participants in a spooky and interactive experience filled with surprises at every turn.

The week also featured our annual Halloween pub night, known as "The Last Dance." This event was a highlight, featuring a lively costume contest that celebrated both individual creativity and group themes, encouraging everyone to get into the Halloween spirit. Adding to the excitement, we organized a trip to Canada's Wonderland Haunt, where attendees could experience the park's chilling attractions and haunted mazes.

To wrap up the week, we hosted a virtual pumpkin carving contest, allowing participants to showcase their artistic skills from the comfort of their homes. Overall, Chills and Thrills Week was a fantastic blend of community spirit, creativity, and Halloween fun, making it a memorable celebration for all involved.

BOLLYWOOD PUB NIGHT

We held our Bollywood Pub Night in November as a prelude for Diwali, bringing the South Asian community together. We collaborated and featured phenomenal performances from the Erindale Punjabi Association, South Asian Student Association, Indian Students' Association, and the Gujarati Students' Association.

Students were encouraged to wear their traditional attire. We had two DJs to bring about intercultural celebration and had delicious appetisers (samosas and spring rolls). Over 300 students participated, creating some unforgettable memories and a vibrant night to remember!



ACADEMIC ADVOCACY VIDEO SERIES

episode one: intro



ACADEMIC ADVOCACY WEEK

Academic Advocacy Week, running from November 18th to 22nd, included an online Academic Integrity series designed to educate students on policies related to academic conduct and offences.

The series provided an overview of the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (COB), including videos that explained academic policies, defined academic offences, outlined possible sanctions, and offered guidance on how students can avoid breaches of academic integrity.

This initiative aimed to increase awareness and understanding of the rules and expectations surrounding academic honesty.





SERVICES

THE BLIND DUCK

Blind Duck is the most cost effective restaurant on campus with an extensive menu. Catering to students' many dietary needs, the Blind Duck offers a variety of options for students to choose from, ranging from breakfast items to snacks and dinner items. It is also the only place on campus that serves alcohol.

Additionally, this year, the Blind Duck introduced Chinese cuisine at Blind Duck, which not only adds diversity to the existing menu but also allows everyone to enjoy cultural food. If you have questions or suggestions regarding the Blind Duck please email our Vice President Internal, Ronny Chen at vpinternal@utmsu.ca, or our General Manager, Retail Operations at shane@utmsu.ca.

THE DUCK STOP

The Duck Stop Convenience Store has been a supplies staple for students since 2015. We ensure that the Duck Stop is stocked with reasonably priced items for our students. As we got more students back to the campus, the sale volume of the Duck Stop increased. In October, we also introduced a variety of Chinese snacks at the Duck Stop.

If you have questions or suggestions regarding the Duck Stop please email our infoBooth Staff at info Booth@utmsu.ca.





THE BLIND DUCK STATISTICS



7000 PEOPLE SERVED PER MONTH



POPULAR ITEMS

- Buffalo Chicken Fries
- Chicken Fingers
- Chicken Shawarma Poutine



**BEST SELLER!
OVER 10,000 WINGS
SOLD PER MONTH!**

THE DUCK STOP STATISTICS



3000 TRANSACTIONS PER MONTH



SALES AVERAGE AT \$3.99 PER CUSTOMER

FUN FACT!

DID YOU KNOW THAT THE DUCK STOP OFFERS THE MOST AFFORDABLE PRICES ON CAMPUS!

POPULAR PURCHASES INCLUDE SNACKS, DRINKS, AND CONFECTIONARY ITEMS.

GRADUATION PHOTOS

The UTMSU provides all UTM graduates with the opportunity to have their photos professionally taken for their respective Graduating Class Composite. Included in a photo session is a minimum of nine unique digital online proofs and a copy of the class composite.

To ensure accessibility and flexibility, new sessions are added weekly to accommodate the needs of graduating students. If you have questions regarding Graduate Photos please email Lassman Studios at questions@lassmanstudios.com.



HEADSHOT SERVICE

As part of the Job Readiness Support Program, the UTMSU is providing students with the Headshot Service!

The Headshot Service helps students with their professional development, such as on LinkedIn, which will be able to help students utilize the resource and stand out with their profile when connecting and networking with various people on the platform.

This service captures the headshot/portrait of students, where they will be able to use the pictures on whatever platform they desire, which will help in enhancing their e-profiles on different social media platforms.



HOW MANY U-PASSES WERE DISTRIBUTED FOR F 2023 & W 2024 AND SUMMER 2024?

Fall = 16,630
Winter = 16,191
Summer = 8,878
Total = 41,699



HOW MANY TAXES WERE FILED AT LAST YEAR'S TAX CLINIC 2023?

Approximately 239 people were assisted in-person.
We were open Monday - Thursday, 11am-5pm for 4 weeks.



WHAT ARE THE HIGHEST NUMBERS OF SOLD ITEMS AT THE INFOBOOTH BETWEEN SEPT 2022 - AUG 2023?

Cineplex = 202
Classic bowl = 249
Shuttle = 3762



HOW MANY LOCKERS RENTED FALL 2022 & WINTER 2023?

321 lockers!



HEALTH & DENTAL PLAN

UTMSU provides affordable and comprehensive health and dental coverage to over 16,000 full-time members at UTM.

Based on our 2024-2025 plan usage review, we saw that a large proportion of our members were prescribed antidepressants. The mental health and wellbeing of our students is our top priority, which is why we have expanded the efforts of our My Mental Health Matters campaign through our Peer Support Program. Alongside this program, we have successfully increased the amount of visits to see a mental health professional from 20 to 25 visits during a benefit year.

Additionally, Green Shield Canada (GSC) has provided accessible virtual health support, specifically for mental wellbeing. This can be seen through their online service Inkblot Therapy. Students utilizing Inkblot services receive counselling that is intended, by design, to be longer-term in nature and intent. GSC also provides Gender Affirmation care, supporting students on their gender transition journey which includes reimbursement for core surgeries not covered by provincial or territorial coverage and services, as well as reimbursement for surgical enhancement of an individual's features that aligns with their accepted gender ideal.

By being able to administer our own health and dental plan, we are better equipped to serve our members and support them with any questions. If you have questions regarding the health and dental plans please email the Health and Dental Coordinator at health@utmsu.ca or visit the infoBooth Desk in the UTM Student Centre building.

U-PASS PROGRAM

The Universal Transit Pass (U-Pass) is a program offered through the UTMSU in partnership with the City of Mississauga. It allows undergraduate and graduate students to travel fare-free in Mississauga via MiWay transit authority. Eligibility for this service is determined by the associated U-Pass fee applied to a student's academic invoice during the Fall/Winter terms or the Summer term.

Nearly 16,000 students have been using a digital U-Pass since last year distributed through the PRESTO E-Tickets app. Besides improving access to transit, this program is also a step towards reducing our carbon footprint. During renegotiations this past year, the UTMSU and the City of Mississauga have decided to shift U-Pass distribution platforms from the PRESTO E-Tickets app to PRESTO eVouchers, which will potentially come into effect sometime next academic year.

This change allows students to use their U-Pass by tapping on the bus instead of scanning, significantly reducing user interface issues, and offers students access to PRESTO's One Fare System which allows students access to a 2-hour transfer.

If you have questions regarding the Digital U-Pass Program, please email our Vice President External Daniel Ripoll at vpexternal@utmsu.ca or the U-Pass Program coordinator at upass@utmsu.ca.

DISCOUNTS

The UTMSU provides a variety of discount codes and coupons to students so they can save money. Current discounts include: Discounted Cineplex tickets, Discounted Classic Bowling tickets, Wonderland tickets, Theatre Erindale shows and more. These tickets are available at the infoBooth Desk. A detailed list of available discounts can be found at: utmsu.ca/service/discounts.

If you have any questions regarding the discounts, please email our infoBooth Staff at infobooth@utmsu.ca.

TAX CLINIC

The UTMSU, in collaboration with the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA), offers free tax filing services from mid-March until the end of April. The UTMSU selected and trained over 25 volunteers to help administer this service in 2025. This service is available to every student, whether they are domestic or international. A total of 226 returns were filed through our 2024 clinic, almost close to our pre-pandemic numbers. Our upcoming tax clinic will run between March-April, 2024.

Students are encouraged to contact taxclinic@utmsu.ca with any questions about our upcoming 2025 clinic.

BURSARIES

The UTMSU is committed to advocating for a free and accessible education and firmly believes in supporting students who are in need of financial assistance. As such, the UTMSU offers bursaries to all UTM students during the Summer, Fall, and Winter semesters. Applications are assessed through a combination of bank statements, financial information, housing situations, and personal statements, and funding is allocated on a case by case basis.

In the summer of 2024, the UTMSU re-launched the transit bursary to support students who are commuting long distances for summer courses. At the beginning of the Fall semester, the Equity Team processed and started processing applications of students via the Bursary Committee.

If you have questions regarding the Bursaries Program please email our Vice President Equity, Philip Anyang at vpequity@utmsu.ca.



FOOD CENTRE

The Food Centre is a space on campus for students to access healthy food, hygiene products, and other necessities, while joining a wider community of enthusiastic staff and volunteers to address food insecurity. Over the last year, the Food Centre has furthered its partnership with the Mississauga Food Bank to provide a wider range of vegan and gluten-free products, as well as increase the current capacity of the Centre to support more students.

To access the Food Centre's free groceries program, a student needs to fill up a weekly form found on the UTMSU website to book a time for a food pick-up:

utmsu.ca/service/food-centre-order/.

The Food Centre also hosted several giveaways, including a Smoothie giveaway in May, Pink lemonade & treats in July, an Ice

Coffee event in September, and a Hot Chocolate bar in November.

This year the UTMSU also partnered with a new sustainable food company called Tre'dish. This is a company aimed at fighting food In-security with the concept of providing cheap affordable groceries to students through their company platform.

A majority of the products they provide are perishable food items such as vegetables, groceries and meat whilst the Food Bank provides the non-perishable items. Students are allowed to access both.

If you would like to volunteer, have ideas for the Food Centre that you would like to see implemented, or are in need of food, please contact our Food Coordinator at food@utmsu.ca.



HERE TO HELP WELLNESS PROGRAM

Previously known as the Peer Support Program, this year the UTMSU has rebranded and expanded its resource program as the Here to Help Wellness program, with plans of a brand new Wellness Centre within the Student Centre coming Fall 2025!

This program was developed with the understanding that there is a lack of mental health resources available to students at UTM, and to recognize the importance of wellness and peer to peer support and community building. The program's goal is to provide a service that meets the needs of students and is individually tailored to support students with their specific needs.

For the 2024-2025 academic year, our team of 16 passionate volunteers have received extensive training to ensure that they are equipped to support students and navigate various conversations relating to mental health. Training includes general equity and anti-oppression training, youth peer support training, and survivor-centric training. Students accessing the program are matched with volunteers with similar lived experiences to ensure they receive the best support possible.

As the program grows, the Wellness Centre will be a holistic, inviting space within the Student Centre that goes beyond traditional mental health support. The Here to Help program hosts regular de-stressor events, casual wellness drop-ins, and workshops to build practical wellness skills. Students can look forward to guest speakers sharing insights on mental health and self-care, alongside opportunities for both private one-on-one appointments and group drop-in sessions where students can find support among peers.

For questions related to the Mental Health Here to Help Program, please contact our President, Joelle Salsa, at president@utmsu.ca, or Peer Support Coordinator, Isis Dai at here@utmsu.ca.

ACADEMIC SOCIETY MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Over the summer, the UTMSU collaborated with nine academic societies across campus to create the Academic Mentorship Program (AMP), aimed at providing students with valuable guidance and support.

The program was developed in partnership with the Erindale Chemical & Physical Sciences Society (ECPSS), Sociology & Criminology Society (SCS), Erindale Biology Society (EBS), English and Drama Student Society (EDSS), Psychology Association of Undergraduate Students at Erindale (PAUSE), Philosophy Academic Society (PAS), Department of Visual Studies Student Society (DVSSS), Language Studies Academic Society (LSAS), and Student Association for Geography & Environment (SAGE).

The program's implementation began with each society appointing a Mentorship Coordinator to serve as a liaison with UTMSU. Applications for mentors and mentees were then opened, and, once recruitment was completed, mentors were carefully selected and matched with mentees.

Before the official launch, mentors participated in two training sessions: one on academic integrity delivered by the Academic Integrity Unit, and an anti-oppression session facilitated by UTMSU. The program formally kicked off with a meet-and-greet event on October 15, 2024 where mentors and mentees had the opportunity to connect and engage directly with each other.

CALL FOR MENTORS!

Join the UTMSU AMP (Academic Mentorship Program)!



UTMSU RENTAL PROGRAMS

LAPTOP RENTAL PROGRAM

The UTMSU is committed to the needs of students and firmly believes in helping out those who are in need of financial assistance. As part of our ongoing bursary program, the Laptop Rental Program, provides essential laptop access for students to help alleviate the cost of education for students in financial need.

The application process has been simplified, making it easier for students to apply. Additionally, we have expanded the program and added more laptops to our inventory to better serve our student community.

This service is application based, which takes into consideration students' demonstrated financial need. The application can be found on our website, and needs to be submitted to president@utmsu.ca, along with the relevant supporting documents. Students can rent a laptop for up to an entire semester, with no charge.

For any questions or inquiries related to the Laptop Rental Program, email our President, Joelle Salsa at president@utmsu.ca.

GYM EQUIPMENT RENTAL PROGRAM

This program allows students to have access to work-out equipment and use it from the comfort of their home, completely free of charge. Students can drop by the InfoBooth in the Student Centre, between 10am and 6pm on weekdays.

Upon request, and depending on the availability of the equipment, students will receive a bag containing work-out equipment that they can keep for up to 2 weeks at a time (with the possibility of extending the rental period, if needed).

If you have any questions or inquiries about the Gym Equipment Rental Program, please contact our President, Joelle Salsa at president@utmsu.ca.

TEXTBOOK EXCHANGE PROGRAM

The UTMSU has expanded the Textbook Exchange Program in an effort to financially support students on campus. The textbook exchange allows students to drop off and pick up textbooks they need for class, free of charge. Why? Because accessible education is a right!

The program is open to all UTM students between 10am and 6pm on weekdays. In order to use this service, students can consult the list of textbooks we currently have, which is available on our website and social media platforms. Students can then drop by the InfoBooth in the Student Centre, to pick up a textbook and exchange it for one of their own, free of charge. The Textbook Exchange Program bookshelf is located in the Green Room - students can also come in to see which textbooks are available in person. The UTMSU also welcomes textbook donations from students.

For any questions or inquiries related to the Textbook Exchange Program, email our President, Joelle Salsa at president@utmsu.ca.

CAMPUS GROUPS

(RE)RECOGNITION

The Campus Group recognition process is conducted yearly to ensure clubs and societies remain active, update their documents, and create a plan and budget for the year.

The recognition period also allowed for members with outstanding and new initiatives to send in proposals for new UTMSU clubs. During the 2023-2024 recognition period, 104 clubs and 17 academic societies were recognized.

FUNDING

Every UTMSU affiliated campus group receives yearly base funding to support their initiatives for their members. Funding for Levy Groups is allocated to their respective student levies. For Academic Societies, it is decided by the Academic Society Advisory Committee based on enrollment numbers of each program.

For clubs, it is calculated by the Clubs' Committee after completing the recognition process. UTMSU club funding is based on multiple factors, including, but not limited to, membership size, awards won, amount of time the club has been active, etc. The UTMSU provides funding for campus groups to assist with hosting events, giving prizes, and covering other overhead fees.

AUDITS

The UTMSU conducts biannual audits for campus groups; once at the end of the fall semester and once at the end of the winter semester. Audits ensure that campus groups are using their funds appropriately and that there is no financial mismanagement.

The submission and passing of the audit allows for groups to receive future funding. For the 2023-2024 academic year, campus groups have submitted a Fall Audit (which went over all financial activity from the fall semester) in December. The Winter audit was submitted in the summer months, along with the recognition package.



CAMPUS GROUPS TRAININGS

The UTMSU hosts several trainings and workshops for campus group executives throughout the academic year. There are both mandatory and optional training sessions. Mandatory training includes recognition, audit, and election. In these spaces, campus groups are informed on how they can carry out all of their required documents.

Other training topics include consent, equity, and good finances, budgeting, professionalism, and sponsorship. The UTMSU also offers trainings upon request. The UTMSU has hosted four training sessions so far to help with recognition packages and to transition incoming executives.

COLLABORATIVE, EMERGENCY AND GREEN GRANTS FUNDING POOLS

There are three additional pools of funds allocated for campus groups funding pools are allocated for campus groups to apply for in case they need extra funding for their initiatives.

The Collaborative Fund is to encourage collaboration amongst clubs, societies, and the UTMSU.

The Emergency Fund is a pool of funds set aside in case a campus group experiences an unexpected and significant financial loss.

Green Grants are grants given to those who are starting a new sustainable/green initiative and need extra funding and/or resources.

Collectively, there been 12 applications from various campus groups to access these funds, and all have been approved by their respective committees.

CLUBS COMMITTEE

The Clubs Committee is a committee responsible for supporting and overseeing UTMSU recognized clubs. It is composed of UTMSU executives, board members and 1 staff member. The committee's primary responsibilities are to allocate funding, recognize new and existing clubs,

supervise elections and approve collaborative emergency funding and green grants requests. The committee has met 1 times throughout this academic year, mainly to recognize clubs and approve collaborative funding requests.

ACADEMIC SOCIETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASAC)

ASAC is the committee responsible for supporting and overseeing the 1 existing Academic Societies at UTM. The committee has three UTMSU representatives and three representatives from the Office of the Dean, as both groups co-fund the Academic Societies. The committee's primary responsibilities are to allocate funding, approve recognition, approve audits and supervise elections.

Throughout the last few months, the committee has met to review recognition packages and funding. The committee successfully passed our society's recognition packages and allocated funding for each.

In addition, the academic societies got the opportunity to apply to the Academic Society Initiative Prizes, where they will be able to receive fund awards.

ROOM AND TABLE BOOKINGS, AND OTHER RESOURCES FOR CAMPUS GROUPS

UTMSU recognized groups are able to book spaces in the Student Centre to host meetings, events, fundraisers, and more. The UTMSU also offers after-hours event timeframes for students who may not be able to book during regular hours. The Student Centre has spaces that can be used for events, excluding the Blind Duck.

Groups are also encouraged to use the Great Hall in the Student Centre to table, set up a table and promote their group to students. Campus groups are also encouraged to apply for office and locker space so that they can store their materials.

We currently have _____ groups in an office space and _____ groups assigned to a locker.

INTERNAL MEETINGS

QUALITY SERVICE TO STUDENTS (QSS) COUNCIL MEETINGS

The QSS Council is a forum for students and service administrators to explore and improve the quality of student services. The UTMSU has 6 votes on the council and makes recommendations based on student feedback regarding various student services (e.g. Career Centre, Recreational, Athletics and Wellness Centre, International Education Centre, etc.) and the fees collected for those services.

COUNCIL ON STUDENT SERVICES (COSS)

The Council on Student Services serves as a space to discuss how student experiences can be enhanced at all three campuses at the University of Toronto.

The Vice President External of the UTMSU serves as the representative from the UTM campus and votes on topics regarding central services at UofT.

COMMITTEE ON STANDING

The Committee on Standing reviews appeals made to the Office of the Registrar. These appeals usually pertain to late withdrawing from a course, requesting late CR/NCR, deferring a final exam, etc.

It is made up of staff from the Office of the registrar, faculty, and one student representative from the UTMSU. The Vice President University Affairs sits on this committee and assesses supporting documents that come with the appeal and then votes on each student's petition.

FOOD SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

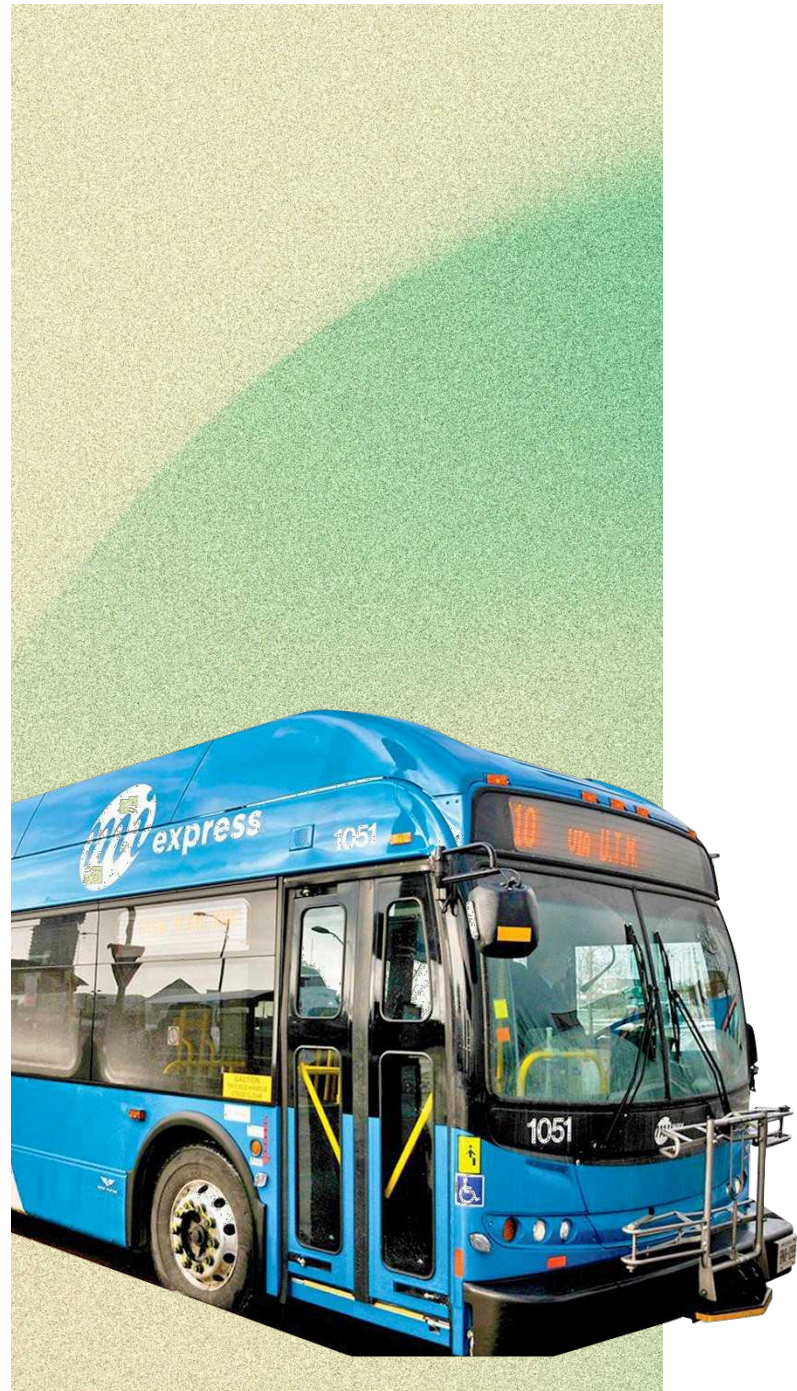
The UTMSU holds two student seats on the Food Services Advisory Committee Meeting. The committee is responsible for reviewing the hospitality services budget, as well as current and upcoming food services on campus.

It is a space where the UTMSU actively advocates for cheaper and more diverse food options on campus, creating pathways for students to provide feedback about food services, making food quality information readily available to all students and expanding food services opening hours

TRANSPORTATION & PARKING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The UTMSU also holds three student seats on the Transportation & Parking Advisory Committee. The committee is responsible for reviewing the budget, as well as current and future initiatives regarding transportation at UTM.

It is a space where the UTMSU brings up student concerns regarding the high prices of parking passes, and the lack of parking spots available.



EXTERNAL MEETINGS

MEETINGS

- City of Mississauga
 - Alvin Tedjo
 - Dipika Damerla
 - Natalie Hart
 - Joe Horneck
 - John Kovac
 - Stephen Dasko
- Miway
- ACTO
- ACORN
- HOUSE Canada
- IKEA

JUSTICE FOR PEEL

..

CITY OF MISSISSAUGA OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

...

The UTMSU releases statements, membership advisories, and media releases. The UTMSU occasionally appears on TV, radio, and in news articles. Communications to members and the general public through mainstream media and social media are crucial in shifting the discourse on student issues.

Since the summer, several training workshops have been held to teach UTMSU staff members the communications and branding goals of the upcoming year. This included increased transparency, consistency, accessibility, as well as sharing more approachable content. As part of these changes, increased use of Instagram reels has improved the representation of the student body and celebrating student life on campus.

INTERVIEWS

The UTMSU executives have completed over 10 interviews with campus media (the Varsity and the Medium). These interviews covered topics including orientation week, The launch of the CR/NCR survey, Students Against War campaign, and the UTMSU's plans for the academic year. The UTMSU President has been interviewed by The Varsity regarding our Palestine organizing as part of the Students Against War campaign.

NEWSLETTERS

The UTMSU releases newsletters to the membership. These newsletters discuss upcoming events, campaigns, and services for students to access. In addition to the UTMSU newsletter, the WeChat team continues to work on a monthly multilingual tweet-style newsletter for members.

STATEMENTS

Over the last few months, the UTMSU has released statements reflecting its stance on key global and campus-related issues, emphasizing solidarity and advocacy. UTMSU, alongside all five University of Toronto student unions, addressed the administration's response to the People Circle for Palestine encampment, raising concerns about the censorship of student voices.

Additionally, it expressed solidarity with students in Bangladesh, voiced support for international student movements, and released statements condemning attacks in Lebanon by the Israeli government. On campus, UTMSU responded to an incident in August involving an assault at the CCT Sister's Prayer Space by creating a temporary prayer space to support affected students. These statements, which showcase UTMSU's commitment to supporting marginalized and impacted communities, can be found at utmsu.ca/statements.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The UTMSU's social media saw increases across all platforms. The UTMSU WeChat account had the most significant increase of 45% in total followers bringing the current total to 1118.

Whereas the UTMSU Instagram page saw an almost 30% increase in total followers, from 8,047 followers to over 11.3k followers currently, with post engagement increasing as well. Additionally, the Facebook page saw a 4% increase in total page followers bringing the total amount to 8,047.

FINANCES

OVERVIEW OF THE UTMSU BUDGET

Budgets are about priorities, and the UTMSU's priority is its members. The UTMSU Budget is prepared and revised in three phases: Preliminary Budget, Operating Budget and Revised Budget.

They all follow the Budget Planning Framework set forth in the Union's Operational Policy Manual. The operational policy outlines an eight-step process that the UTMSU must follow to create its budget each year. All budgets must be approved by the UTMSU Board of Directors.

WHAT IS AN AUDIT?

A financial audit is an objective examination and evaluation of the financial statements of an organization to make sure that the financial records are a fair and accurate representation of the transactions they claim to represent.

ABOUT OUR AUDITORS

As ratified at the November 2023 AGM, the UTMSU auditors for the 2023-2024 audit are Yale PGC LLP. The firm has provided a range of services including completion of statutory audits and preparation of review and compilation engagements since 1953. This was the fourth year that Yale PGC LLP audited UTMSU.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

The UTMSU membership dues were democratically established by referendum so that students could provide services, host events, and advocate for their needs. To this date, membership dues are collected by the UTMSU each semester to finance crucial services, events, and campaigns.

The UTMSU collects \$41.11 per session for full-time and \$1.33 per session for part-time, which is subject to increases with cost-of-living, according to the referendum approved in 2006. Previously a portion of the membership fees was disbursed to the University of Toronto Students Union (UTSU).

Since the UTMSU/UTSU separation was endorsed at the AGM in 2018, the UTMSU now collects the full amount for UTM specific programming.



**OVER THE PAST YEAR,
THE UTMSU WORKED WITH:**

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Local 3902

United SteelWorkers (USW), Local 1998

The University of Toronto Faculty Association (UTFA)

The University of Toronto Students Union (UTSU)

The Scarborough Campus Students Union (SCSU)

The Association of Part Time Students at UofT (APUS)

**The University of Toronto Graduate Student Union (UTGSU)
Fight for \$15 and Fairness**

Meal Exchange

TTC Riders

National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM)

**Ontario Federation of Labor (OFL)
UTILE**

Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT)

Downtown Legal Services (DLS)

**Migrant Students United Project with the Migrant Workers
Alliance for Change**

The work and victories of the UTMSU are strengthened and made possible by working together with our coalition partners who share similar values like a free, high quality and accessible post-secondary education, safe and affordable housing, and fair working conditions.

ANNUAL REPORT

winter
2023



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO MISSISSAUGA
STUDENTS' UNION
2023